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AUTHOR Sacks, Renee K.
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ABSTRACT

An exploration of the linguistic patterns and conversational strategies of adult learners was conducted to clarify the relationship between individuals' oral communicative ability and their levels of proficiency in the nonoral literate modes of reading and writing. The connection between social class and language development was also examined. Sixteen male Caucasian college students were selected to participate in the study on the basis of their linguistic features and skills. Their socioeconomic status was determined after their selection. Following an assessment of the students' reading and writing skills, they were segmented into two groups on the basis of proficiency in these secondary language skills. They next participated in two communication situations which were constructed on the theory that shared referents between the speaker and listener affect the speaker's linguistic behavior. The findings supported the notion that the oral communicative competence of speakers is reflective of their proficiency in reading and writing. Socioeconomic status did not appear to be a significant cause for the linguistic and communicative differences evidenced by the two groups. (FL)

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ASPECTS OF COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE:

THE EFFECT OF SITUATION UPON THE ORAL LANGUAGE OF ADULTS

WITH DIFFERENT READING AND WRITING PROFICIENCIES

Dr. Renee K. Sacks
Assistant Professor of Communications
Hofstra University
Hempstead, New York 11550

500 Hampton Avenue
Brooklyn, New York 11235

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This research study explores the linguistic patterns and conversational strategies of adult learners in order to clarify the relationship between an individual's oral communicative ability and his level of proficiency in the non-oral literate modes of reading and writing; a concommitant thrust of this study investigates the reliability of the Bernstein (1974) theory of linguistic codes which postulates an irrevocable connection between social class and language development.

The theoretical concept of the speaker's communicative competence, his general ability to consciously or unconsciously modify his oral language in response to the demands of different situations (Hymes, 1972), has been supported by current research. Some studies (Sachs and Devin, 1974; Shatz and Gelman, 1973) report that this ability is evidenced in children as young as two and three years of age. Other investigations confirm this communicative ability in older children and adults (Edwards, 1975; Ervin-Tripp, 1972). Nevertheless, from a practical perspective, all students do not arrive at school manifesting similar language repertoires useful in the classroom context. These linguistic and communicative distinctions evidenced by varying learning populations suggest important directions for inquiry for both the researcher and the classroom teacher: specifically, what are the linguistic differences among learners; and, more importantly, how do these distinctions bear upon the ability of the student to acquire the secondary and later-learned communicative skills of reading and writing?

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LANGUAGE DIFFERENCE HYPOTHESES

Several important theories speculate on the sources of linguistic and communicative differences among learners. Loban (1976), in his elaborate inventory of the oral and written language of kindergarten through twelfth grade students, reports that correlated relationships between different modes of communication exist and that performance in one or several may be predictive of performance in the others. Thus, a student found to be deficient in one language art may be found deficient in other linguistic skills. While Loban posits no causal reason for this correlation between oral and written performance, he does suggest that, along with developmental factors, the social experience of the student may prove to be an influential element in the primary and secondary language acquisition processes.

Bernstein (1974) in an investigation of British adults with different social class backgrounds, indicates increasing support for the theory that language acquisition and development is determined by the social class of the speaker. According to the Bernstein theory, the student from a low socioeconomic home is largely limited to the use of a restricted, implicit language code, while the middle and upper socioeconomic class learner employs both the restricted, implicit code as well as the elaborated, explicit code. As a result of criticism directed at him for his neglect of and lack of sensitivity to the effect of context on language production (Cazden, 1970; Edwards, 1975), Bernstein has modified his earlier position and now suggests retesting of his hypothesis in varying contexts.

From another research perspective, the development of the student's communicative competence, his ability to modify his language in response to situational

demands, emerges as an alternative hypothesis for explaining differences in students' linguistic and communicative behavior. Recently, this original concept of communicative competence has enlarged its dimensions to include the singular aspect of communicative competence on which schools focus greatest attention, namely, literacy, or ability to read and to write.

Philips (1975) explores the assumption which maintains that the development of the ability to read and to write (two of the many modes comprising the student's communicative repertoire) may be regarded as an integral component of his communicative competence. As an aspect of this, the ability to adapt one's speech to the demands of different situations may be considered an important reflection of the speaker's ability to adjust to different demands linguistically in non-oral communicative contexts, such as those manifested in reading and writing. More specifically, how well a student can establish a speaker-listener relationship by noting how much information his listener shares with him may have a direct correlation with his ability to create an artificial or synthetic reader, if one is not already perceived, in writing and equally in reading establish an interactive relationship with an unknown writer.

Helping to confirm Philips' position, Shaughnessy (1977), in her exhaustive analysis of the written errors of basic writers, maintains that an examination of their oral language behavior should yield important information for understanding their literate behavior. Moreover, Britton and his colleagues (1975) stress that the oral resources which the child brings to the writing act affect the development of his written language competence. In effect, as a result of their investigations of the developmental

writing abilities of students age 11 - 18, they emphasize that the relationship of talk to writing is pivotal to the development of the writing process. Complementing this view is the hypothesis that if the student is to communicate he must call upon his communicative competence, that is, his ability to perceive and adjust to his audience; and, in the context of the literate communication situation of writing, he must be even more keenly sensitive to the needs of new and unfamiliar audiences.

THE PRESENT STUDY

Since the communicative contexts of reading and writing create a more sophisticated set of demands to which the student must adapt linguistically, assessment of the linguistic flexibility of the student, his level of communicative competence specifically in situations which create increased demands for elaboration, becomes an important research goal. In partial response to this need, the present study investigated the oral language behavior of two groups of college students in order to examine the nature of the students' oral language performance and the flexibility of that behavior in two different communication situations so constructed as to create different demands upon the speaker. The students were identified with respect to average or below-average reading and writing proficiencies and were found to be normally distributed across social classes, with the majority of students participating in the study falling in the lower socioeconomic class. The students were segmented into two groups on the basis of secondary language skill proficiency.

The students' speech was evaluated on the basis of quantitative and qualitative language measures with the intent of assessing (1) the characteristic language patterns of the two groups; (2) the characteristic language patterns used in each of the situations; and (3) the interaction of the speaker type and the situation in determining the language patterns used.

Underlying this investigation was the hypothesis that on the basis of secondary language skill proficiencies, students could be predicted to manifest different oral language patterns and communicative strategies as they interacted in two different communication situations.

METHODOLOGY

Participants

To determine the relationship between language performance and secondary linguistic skills, 16 male caucasion, native American students, ranging in age from 18-28, were selected to participate in this study on the basis of linguistic features and skills. They were not chosen on the basis of social class considerations.

The sample was randomly selected from two different learning populations at one of the community colleges of the City University of New York complex. One sample was randomly selected from the population of remedial English college students (RECS), the portion of the total population of freshmen students who evidence inadequate reading and writing skills. The other sample was randomly selected from the population of non-remedial English college students (N-RECS), the portion of the total population of freshmen students

who evidence adequate reading and writing skills.

After random selection, the reading skill of each student was measured by the student's performance on the Stanford Test of Academic Skills (TASK) Test, Level II-Junior/Community College Grades 9-14 (1972), and further confirmed by a correlated score achieved on a reading placement examination administered by the college.

Assessment of each student's writing was conducted by employing the Syntactic Density Score (Golub, 1973) to determine the syntactic density and grade level of the written discourse of each student in the study.

Sex, age and race of all the participating students were controlled since research indicates that these variables are critical factors affecting language production (Sachs, 1972).

Because the secondary objective of this study was to determine the nature of the relationship which may exist between social class and linguistic performance, the socioeconomic status of each student was reported. A socioeconomic index which employed three weighted indicators of productive status (occupation of the breadwinner, education of the respondent, and income of the family) was used to describe the population selected; it was not employed as a factor for population selection. This index indicated that the two groups of linguistically-determined students were equally distributed across high and low ranges of the three major social class groups, with both groups skewed in favor of membership in the low socioeconomic class.

Procedures

Each student participated in two communication situations which were videotaped. The use of an unobtrusive technique which concealed the actual purpose of the study was necessary. Thus, all students were told that they were participating in a filmed

study about student life. The researcher explained to each student that she was interested in their reactions and attitudes about the college which they attended. Also, students were told that the video-taped film was to be an edited compilation of their responses, so they did not need to be concerned about what they said.

All of the students in the study participated in two different communication situations which were constructed on the basis of the theory that shared referents between speaker and listener affect the speaker's linguistic behavior. In one situation, a context-dependent situation (CDS), speaker and listener shared common referents; in the second situation, a context-independent situation (CIS), speaker and listener did not share common knowledge. Thus, in the context-dependent situation, both speaker and listener knew each other and simultaneously viewed the same stimulus film; in the context-independent situation, an unfamiliar listener was employed to talk with the speaker about selected topics. These procedures were tested in an earlier pilot study and proved to be reliable language elicitation techniques despite the presence of video-tape equipment. Also, exposure to each situation was counterbalanced to control for order effect. At the conclusion of the study, students were informed as to the actual purpose of the project.

Research Design

The research design employed in this study was a two-factor analysis of variance with repeated measures on one factor (situation). An equal number of students were used in each cell to determine if main effect differences existed between speaker types and between situations and to determine if an interaction effect existed between speaker type and situation. When all of the assumptions of the ANOVA had been satisfied, an analysis of variance for two factors with repeated measures on one factor was performed on the data (Winer, 1971).

Language Measures

Culled from the two communication situations, two hundred independent utterances for each of the 16 students provided the data for analysis in this study. Both quantitative and qualitative assessment of oral language were conducted in this study through the use of language measures sensitive to the following five categories*:

I. Linguistic Complexity: Complexity of language is often noted in terms of elaborateness; that is, the various syntactic strategies used to expand the utterance beyond the simple subject and predicate. In this study, complexity of language was assessed through the measurement of mean length of response, Loban's (1963; 1976) Index of Subordination, and number and type of dependent clauses (noun, adjective and adverb). Language research (Hunt, 1970; Loban, 1976) increasingly points to a developmental paradigm for the use of these three dependent clauses. Noun clauses learned early in life are not indicators of sophisticated subordination strategies while adjective clauses and especially adverb clauses currently are considered to be the better indices of mature language development.

II. Linguistic Efficiency: Language tangles and unnecessary and meaningless repetitions are considered indicators of linguistic efficiency; that is, a

* Primarily, the measures used to assess language in this study are drawn from the work of Edwards (1975) who synthesized the language instruments used by Bernstein (1974), Lawton (1963), Loban (1963), Poole (1975) and other researchers investigating language change and adaptability.

reflection of the degree of difficulty or ease a speaker may have in producing coherent and organized verbal responses. In this study, assessment of the efficiency of the student's language was made by quantitatively measuring the number of mazes (false starts, linguistic tangles) and attention claimers (words such as "Okay," "Well," "Right," usually occurring in the initial part of an utterance).

III. Differentiation of Meaning: One measure of differentiation of meaning is the speaker's use of nominal elements; that is, his linguistic selection of lexical elements which communicate specific and elaborate meanings. Measures employed in this study to assess differentiation of meaning considered the use of the nominal group.

IV. Context-Dependent and Context-Independent Language: Context-dependent language is organized as a result of closely shared identifications between the speaker and the listener which employs limited syntactic constructions and removes the need to elaborate verbal meanings and logical continuity in speech. Context-independent language, on the other hand, organized as a result of a lack of closely shared identifications, helps to communicate elaborate meanings and logical continuity in speech. Since the use of a pronoun in discourse minimally assumes that both speaker and listener share knowledge of its referent or antecedent, measures of pronominal reference were selected in the present study to analyze language used in communication situations with the objective of assessing the speaker's reliance on context to communicate meaning.

V. Discourse Patterns: Recent research (Duncan, 1974; Keenan, 1974) has examined the way oral discourse is structured in an attempt to better understand how speakers communicate. Underlying this perspective of communication is the assumption that ideas are manipulated (i.e., expanded, reduced, embedded, repeated or deleted) in order to sustain discourse. Theoretically, novel utterances, utterances which are not related to an antecedent turn by some syntactic function and are not response constants, are representative of a more creative use of language. Substitution functions, syntactic strategies which take an utterance within a conversational turn and replace a constituent within it with a constituent of the same grammatical category, assume that the speaker is relying on a planned series of similarly-structured syntactic responses to sustain communication. Quantitative measurements of novel utterances and substitution functions were made over an extended sequence of ten utterances produced in the independent situation.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

While many variables were used to assess the language patterns and communication strategies of the two groups of linguistically-determined speakers, the major results of the linguistic and statistical analyses yielded information on the following: (1) differences between the groups; (2) the effect of situation upon the language produced by the two groups; and (3) the interaction effect between speaker and situation. Table 1 below summarizes the statistical findings of the study; table 2, following, reports the linguistic findings of the study.

Table 1

A Summary List of Variables Significant at the .05 and .01 Level by Two-Way Analysis of Variance with Repeated Measures on One Factor (Situation)

Variable	Speaker	Situation	Speaker X Situation
	F	F	F
I. Language Complexity			
Mean Length of Response	11.7391**	3.2	5.73*
Index of Subordination	4.2088	7.24*	1.41
Dependent Clauses	6.82*	1.86	.4453
II. Linguistic Efficiency			
Mazes	.4763	10.15**	10.04**
Attention Claimers	7.29*	3.44	4.79*
III. Differentiation of Meaning			
Nominal Reference	1.4926	36.25*	1.48
IV. Context-Dependent and Context-Independent Language			
Pronominal Reference	5.803*	.2723	7.5824*

* $p < .05$ $F(1, 14) = 4.6$

** $p < .01$ $F(1, 14) = 8.86$

Table 2

Mean Scores for Remedial English College Students (RECS) and Non-Remedial English College Students (N-RECS) in Context-Dependent Situation (CDS) and Context-Independent Situation (CIS)

Variable	Context-Dependent Situation		Context-Independent Situation	
	RECS	N-RECS	RECS	N-RECS
I. Language Complexity				
Mean Length of Response	8.68	8.53	9.89	11.0
Index of Subordination	19.38	21.1	23.88	31.63
Dependent Clauses	16.0	17.5	20.25	24.63
Noun	6.74	6.88	6.5	5.1
Adjective	4.88	7.1	5.0	6.38
Adverb	.63	1.12	8.8	13.0
II. Linguistic Efficiency				
Mazes	16.25	9.5	10.5	9.5
Attention Claimers	14.0	9.37	5.37	5.75
III. Differentiation of Meaning				
Nominal Reference	53.38	57.63	59.0	72.8
IV. Context-Dependent and Context-Independent Language				
Pronominal Reference	38.5	30.75	36.0	47.48
V. Discourse Analysis *				
Substitution Functions			5.7	1.5
Novel Utterances			3.0	5.7

* Assessment of substitution functions and novel utterances was performed on an extended sequence of 10 independent utterances produced during the context-independent situation. The intent of this analysis was to discover how each type of speaker independently sustained discourse with minimal intervention from the listener.

Differences Between the Groups

Results reported by Table 1 and Table 2 reveal that several important differences existed between the two groups of speakers' (remedial and non-remedial) ability to produce elaborate language, specifically on the measure of mean length of response, use of dependent clauses, use of attention claimers, use of pronominal reference, and the use of different discourse strategies.

Statistically significant differences were found for each of the two groups on the measure of mean length of response and their use of dependent clauses. In both cases, the non-remedial group reported a significantly longer mean length of response ($p < .01$) and a significantly greater use of dependent clauses ($p < .05$) than did the remedial group. Particularly, of the three types of clauses measured, the non-remedial group used more adjective and adverb clauses, while the remedial group used more noun clauses than they did the other two categories of dependent clauses. On the basis of the results, the non-remedial group appeared to produce the kind of dependent clauses associated with mature language ability. The remedial group did not appear to evidence this behavior with equal frequency or flexibility. Thus, the conclusion that the non-remedial group may have significantly more syntactic flexibility with the use of their strategies for extending, combining, synthesizing and subordinating related ideas orally appears reasonable.

The use of attention claimers was reported to be statistically significant between the two groups. The remedial group used significantly more attention claimers than did the non-remedial group ($p < .05$). Helpful as they may be to the speaker in conversation, extensive use of attention claimers, which has little functional importance in discourse,

is a negative indicator of linguistic maturity since they serve to assist the speaker either (1) as routine, habitual language which provides the speaker with a sense of security in communication situations, or (2) as words, phrases or readily available response sets between utterances when he has difficulty in organizing or presenting his message.

The use of pronouns was another distinctive feature which differentiated the two groups. The non-remedial group used significantly more pronouns ($p < .05$) than did the remedial group. However, contrary to expectation of a decrease in pronominalization and subsequently an increase in nominalization in the context-independent situation, the non-remedial group used pronouns rather consistently in both situations as part of their strategy for elaboration. No significant difference was found between the two groups' use of nominal structures in their language ($p > .05$).

Some theories of discourse contend that the use of pronouns reduces explicitness of meaning as well as minimizes the speaker's options for modification and sometimes qualification of ideas. One may conjecture that the non-remedial group, in an attempt to adjust to the demands for increased elaboration and explication of meaning created in the context-independent situation, employed a compensatory strategy, that is, used one set of language structures in place of a more complex structure or set of structures, which resulted in the increased pronoun production reported in the context-independent situation.

The use of substitution functions and novel utterances by the two groups evidenced another source of variation between them. The findings, reported in Table 2, show that the non-remedial group used fewer substitution functions and produced more novel utterances than did the remedial group. Contrastingly, the remedial group appeared to rely upon the use of substitution strategies for elaboration and extension of their ideas in discourse.

These results suggest that each group relied on different syntactic strategies to produce extended discourse and appear to confirm a rigidity on the part of the remedial group to use syntactic options available to them.

Effect of Situation

Control of one's language, considered in the present study as the ability to shift speech styles appropriately in varying situations, is an index of the speaker's communicative competence. Language production of the two groups of speakers in the study was affected by the nature and type of situations in different ways. Specifically, the results, reported by Table 1, suggest that situation affected the speakers' use of the following: production of mazes, Index of Subordination scores, and the use of nominal reference.

In the use of mazes, the non-remedials did not vary their maze production across the two situations. The remedials, on the other hand, produced significantly fewer mazes in the context independent situation than they did in the context-dependent situation ($p < .01$). A speaker's maze production may be interpreted in two ways: (1) as reflecting a speaker's difficulty in organizing his ideas, or (2) as reflecting a speaker's difficulty in presenting his ideas. Difficulty in organizing language for communication suggests that a speaker may have certain problems in planning or structuring the syntactic nest for his ideas; difficulty in presenting his ideas, contrastingly, indicates that a speaker may have too many ideas and/or too many structures for presenting those ideas, resulting in syntactic or semantic interference during the language production process. Conclusions as to the cause for the two groups' maze production would be sheer speculation. What is evident from the findings, however, is that the remedials exercised stronger control on their language in the context-independent situation with respect to maze production, while the non-remedials

used a smaller number of mazes equally in both situations. Thus, one may conclude that maze production was not a context-sensitive variable for the non-remedial group, while for the remedial group, situation, particularly the context-independent situation, affected their ability to organize and/or present language.

Both groups in the study reported significantly higher Index of Subordination scores in the context-independent situation than they did in the context-dependent situation ($p < .05$). Theoretically, in a context-independent situation, when increased demands for elaboration are made, one may assume that a speaker calls upon subordination strategies to satisfy the demands of the situation; conversely, one expects a reduction of subordination in the context-dependent situation where situational demands are minimizing and shared knowledge reduces the need to subordinate ideas. In effect, the findings of this study support these positions, suggesting that the use of subordination strategies are controlled, in part, by the speaker's internalization of the demands of a particular communication situation as well as his ability to subordinate ideas in language.

With respect to nominal reference, both groups significantly nominalized more in the context-independent situation than they did in the context-dependent situation ($p < .05$). Nominal reference reflects the speaker's ability to provide syntactic options for elaboration, modification and qualification of ideas. Thus, both groups were sensitive to the demands of the two situations with respect to the production of nominal referents.

Interaction of Speaker and Situation

Any significance of interaction between speaker and situation demonstrated that one group of speakers produced different language in one of the situations as contrasted with the behavior of the other group. As shown in Table I, significance of interaction was noted

in the study for the following two categories of measures: (1) the speaker's ability to elaborate language in a situation which called for increased elaboration and (2) the speaker's ability to produce efficient language in a situation which necessitated increased economy and precision of language.

The non-remedial group in the context-independent situation evidenced significantly increased mean length of responses ($p < .01$) and significantly greater use of pronouns ($p < .05$). Interestingly, the remedials responded to the demands of the context-independent situation in a way different from the non-remedials. In the context-independent situation, the remedial group increased the level of linguistic efficiency of their language by significantly reducing the number of mazes ($p < .01$) and attention claimers ($p < .05$) produced, strategies which have little functional relationship to the production of elaborate, explicit language.

While both groups appeared aware of the demands of the context-independent situation, they responded to these demands in different ways: the non-remedials through elaboration strategies and the remedials through efficiency strategies. If these different strategies are reflective of the actual language resources the speaker was able to call upon, one may conclude that the remedial group possessed a more restricted range of elaboration resources than did the non-remedial group. Thus, in the context-independent situation which called for increased elaboration and efficiency, the remedial group responded with what resources they had: strategies for efficiency of language, not with the more effective elaboration techniques used by the non-remedial students.

DISCUSSION

The ability to respond to demands for increased elaboration in a context-independent situation, whether oral or literate, is a reflection of the speaker's total command of his communicative repertoire. Conversely, the inability to rise to situational demands which call upon the speaker for elaborate language patterns and communicative strategies suggests that such a speaker has comparatively less command of his range of communicative abilities. If these variable linguistic and communicative skills in oral situations are generalizable to non-oral (reading and writing) situations as some research suggests, then one might conjecture that groups with more restricted communicative competencies would also perform less ably in the non-oral modes of reading and writing. Indeed, the findings and conclusions of this investigation lend support to this notion that the oral communicative competence of the speaker is reflective of his proficiency in the secondary language art skills.

The sociolinguistic notion of communicative competence has important associations with cognitive theories which maintain that language is modified according to the requirements of given situations as a result of the speaker's perception of the lack or existence of shared referents and common knowledge to both himself and his listener. Cognitive psychologists such as Piaget (1926) and Vygotsky (1962) note a developmental schema for sensitivity to or knowledge of what the listener knows. That is, younger, less mature speakers may perceive less of the knowledge of the listener, thus producing egocentric or implicit language which tends to ignore the needs of the listener; alternatively, older, more mature speakers may better perceive this knowledge, thus producing language which is more sensitive to the listener's needs.

The results of this study indicate that indeed both groups perceived the demands of the two communication situations in which they participated, as evidenced by their different scores for each of the two situations; however, the findings demonstrated that one group, the group with proficiency in reading and writing skills, better accommodated to the context-independent situation than did the group with lower secondary language skill proficiencies. Equally significant is the fact that both groups manifested sensitivity towards the demands of each situation but used different strategies to respond to those demands.

Much current research, Bernstein (1974) in England; Poole (1975) in Australia; Labov (1966) and Loban (1976) in the United States, maintains that socioeconomic status is an important variable in language production. These investigations support the contention that speakers with unequal socioeconomic status acquire and use language differently. The little variation in the socioeconomic status found to exist between the two groups of speakers in this study suggests that the social class of the speakers did not appear to be a significant cause for the linguistic and communicative differences which the two groups evidenced. The view that social class determines language rather than affects it does not appear to be confirmed by the findings of this study.

A study conducted by Edwards (1975) reveals interesting parallel implications to the present investigation. In his study of 11-year-old children who were defined into two groups on the basis of the parameters of social class and performance on tasks, Edwards found that both groups evidenced little variation in their oral language on the basis of classification into different social classes; but they did show increased variability between groups when they performed assigned linguistic tasks. That is, the demands of the tasks appeared to affect the language production of all the subjects. If the social

class variables are ruled out, as indeed they were in both studies, then what sources for variability of language production remain? The speaker's communicative competence, his ability to modify language to meet the demands of different situations, is suggested as the possible determining factor.

The results of the present study do reveal that the remedial group, the group with lower proficiencies in reading and writing, did have poorer language abilities. One could speculate from this that the linguistic and communicative variations between the two groups were a reflection of their different levels of communicative competence, and that, consequently, these differing levels of communicative competence may be at the root of the speaker's acquisition and variable use of secondary language skills.

IMPLICATIONS FOR RESEARCH

The acceptance of the theory that the communicative competence of a student includes both his oral and non-oral communicative abilities has important ramifications for research conducted in the area of the acquisition and development of oral and written language skills. Consequently, several important hypotheses upon which research could be conducted have been generated from the findings of this study.

Situation affects the speaker's production of language. Much language research has neglected the variable of situation in the language production process. Clearly, studies which examine language in varieties of contexts are necessary if linguists and language teachers are to better understand the patterns and strategies different speakers employ in varying situations. That research which has been conducted, including the present study, tends to confirm that speakers modify their language according to the demands of different situations; however, little exploration exists with respect to the exact nature of these changes:

what are these changes, how often do they occur, and by whom are they employed? Information from such studies that examine the speaker in a variety of contexts should reveal more than is presently known about the acquisition and development of a speaker's communicative competence and his characteristic use of language.

Speakers use different linguistic patterns and communication strategies to produce oral language in different situations. Results from the present study have demonstrated that both groups of speakers used different elaboration strategies to communicate. Additionally, some speakers in the present study used linguistic compensation strategies; that is, they used one structure in place of another structure of set of structures. Research which examines how students specifically elaborate language and which linguistic compensation strategies they use in lieu of elaboration in oral as well as other communicative modes is an essential area for further research. An illustration of such an investigation might include an examination of a speaker's dependent clause production: how and when does the speaker produce dependent clauses in his speech and his writing? How does he read such structures? And how well does he attend to these structures in listening situations?

Groups defined on the basis of linguistic parameters evidence less variation within groups when compared to groups classified according to sociological parameters. While the present research does not insist that sociological factors are unimportant variables in the language production process, the study does suggest that variation between linguistically-determined groups yields important information which could be lost in an analysis between different social class groups. Studies which examine oral language variation among speakers within the same socioeconomic class, however, are needed to determine the exact extent of the effect of social class on language behavior. Procedurally, it appears reasonable to

recommend that language analysis begin initially with linguistically-determined groups and then subsequently that examination continue along sociological parameters.

A correlated relationship exists between ability in oral language skills and either development or acquisition of secondary language skills. This study has indicated that groups with dissimilar secondary language skill proficiencies behave differently in oral communication situations; that is, groups with higher proficiencies in reading and writing evidence more mature language behavior than do groups with lower proficiencies. Need for research which will help to clarify the exact nature of this relationship among speaking, reading and writing skills clearly exists. Additionally, continued oral language research of groups with higher secondary language skill proficiencies and lower secondary language skill proficiencies should help to better understand how these two different groups use language. Such investigations of the two groups, as demonstrated by the present study, may help to confirm or refute the correlated or causal relationship which possibly may exist between learning to speak and learning to read and write.

Speakers structure their language in different ways during discourse in extended uninterrupted sequences. Results of the present study indicated that the remedial and non-remedial speakers used different discourse strategies (substitution functions and novel utterances to extend and elaborate language. Examination of language in extended discourse sequences uninterrupted by the listener provides unlimited opportunities for analysis of a speaker's syntactic and semantic patterns for organizing language. Additionally, when constraints of situation exist, examination of how a speaker modifies his discourse patterns would be helpful for understanding how the speaker structures and varies language for communication.

Use of routine language is characteristic of some speakers' oral language behavior. The data from this study indicated that speakers employ routine language

(attention claimers, response constants) in context-dependent and context-independent communication situations. Work by Gleason and Weintraub (1975) suggests that a child learns language routines as early, if not earlier, than referential language. Investigations into the role of response constants and the use of efficient language among different populations of speakers, cross-sectionally as well as longitudinally, would be an important research pursuit for understanding how routine language functions in the development of the speaker's oral and written language.

Finally, language measures are not always accurate indices of a speaker's strategy for communication. The data in the present study indicated that during discourse varying strategies for communicating are used by the speaker. For example, a speaker may use an elaboration strategy which repeats an utterance, merely changing one constituent of it in order to maximize elaboration. Illustration: "He wants to get it(/) he wants to get an education/." Current assessment instruments evidence limitations for evaluating the length of such an utterance. The quantification of the mean length of response of this utterance does not discriminate whether the first part of the utterance should be calculated as a maze, a separate utterance or should be considered part of the total utterance. Clearly, research is needed to devise language measures which accurately assess the full complexity and subtlety of oral language produced in discourse.

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